



# Black Education Strategy Roundtable

May 7, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202-0008

Dear Secretary Duncan:

We support Washington State's Race to the Top grant application. The application and associated legislation approved this year show that our state is advancing reforms to help students succeed. With the added leverage of RTT grant funding, our state could expedite its progress.

While we'd hoped for stronger language in some areas of the application, we are pleased with the final product. Powerful stakeholders worked together to craft the application. Their collaboration resulted in reform proposals that are ambitious AND attainable.


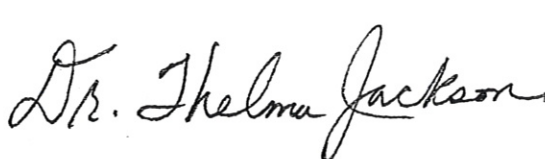
Washington State has a very diverse population. Among our state's one million public school students, 35 percent are children of color, and 40 percent qualify for free or reduced price lunch. RTT funding will advance one of our highest educational priorities – closing the state's achievement gap for students of color and low-income students.

Washington is a global leader in critical industries. We will lose that distinction unless we reform our schools so that children of color – and all children -- achieve at a high level. Only effective and speedy education reform can give our children access to the jobs of the future. RTT is a critical element in that transformation.

We wear various hats as advocates for students. Dr. Jackson is president of the Washington State Alliance of Black School Educators. Dr. Bailey serves on the board of directors of the Pacific Science Center. Recently, we've served as steering team members of the Black Education Strategy Roundtable. Since 2006, this alliance of 300 advocates has worked to move state policy to close the achievement/opportunity gap. In the course of our work, we've seen evidence that change is underway, but it is moving far too slowly. RTT funding would expedite the educational reforms that our children desperately need.

We urge you to look favorably on Washington State's RTT grant application.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thelma Jackson  
Steering Team Member

Dr. Mona Bailey  
Steering Team Member